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DEPARTMENT FOR DAS BRYZA AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES GEORGIA TO AGREE TO JCC MEETING

REF: SECSTATE 23657

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) Ambassador called on Deputy Foreign Minister Manjgaladze on February 27 to deliver reftel demarche urging the Georgians to agree on a date and time of a meeting of the Joint Control Commission (JCC) for South Ossetia. Noting a recent press report on Georgian plans to invest 3.5 million USD in Georgian-controlled villages in South Ossetia, the Ambassador cautioned against actions which could elicit negative comparisons to Russia's unilateral investment in South Ossetia. Manjgaladze responded that the Georgians would live up to their commitment to contribute to the OSCE Donors' Economic Rehabilitation Projects but defended Georgia's right to distribute state funds all over Georgia. He claimed that such investment is different from money coming into a sovereign country, without consent, from another country. He asked if the U.S. would be providing specific comments on Georgia's Memorandum on South Ossetia and expressed concern over references to "the right to self-determination" when talking about Abkhazia. End summary.

2. (C) On February 27, Ambassador called on Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM) Giorgi Manjgaladze to deliver reftel demarche urging Georgia to agree to a date and a time for a meeting of the JCC. Acknowledging that the JCC is stacked against Georgia, the Ambassador noted that failure to participate in the process would undermine Georgia's - and our - ability to gain European support to achieve Georgian goals such as broadening the negotiating format. He noted that the Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) Commander had referred the request for a checkpoint at Didi Gupta - something we and the Europeans had been pushing for - to the next JCC meeting. Going to the meeting would result in either moving ahead on this issue of vital importance, i.e. stopping the flow of weapons and contraband to South Ossetia, or making clear Russian and South Ossetian obstructionism.

3. (C) Manjgaladze asked for feedback on the Georgian Memorandum on South Ossetia. Drawing from talking points, the Ambassador said that the U.S. found many points in the Memorandum positive and consistent with efforts already underway but noted that this initiative would have the greatest resonance if presented against a backdrop of full cooperation on the part of Georgia within the JCC. Manjgaladze said he understood from Georgian counterparts in Vienna that there would be specific points of feedback; the Ambassador agreed to check but based on past exchanges with Washington, the U.S. view was overall positive, with the only caution from Washington being that the Georgians should be careful and flexible on how they deal with the issue of Sanakoyev. He reiterated that this effort will be more successful if done in the context of Georgian cooperation within the JCC.

4. (C) Noting a recent press report on a Georgian plan to

invest 3.5 million USD in Georgian-controlled villages in South Ossetia, the Ambassador cautioned against actions which could elicit negative comparisons to Russia's unilateral investment in South Ossetia. Manjgaladze responded that the Georgians would live up to their commitment to contribute to the OSCE Donors' Economic Rehabilitation Projects -- the first tranche of money was on its way to the OSCE -- but defended Georgia's right to distribute state funds all over Georgia, including to Georgian villages in South Ossetia. He claimed that such investment is different from money coming into a sovereign country, without consent, from another country.

15. (C) Turning to Abkhazia, Manjgaladze asked for clarification on U.S. statements in New York mentioning "territorial integrity" in Abkhazia alongside "the right to self-determination." When pressed, he said that these statements were made privately to Georgian representatives in New York. The Ambassador said he would follow-up but assured Manjgaladze that the U.S. policy has not changed: the U.S. supports Georgia's territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders. Manjgaladze offered that Georgia believes it will be necessary to have a blunt GUAM statement on the conflicts that reinforces the point of "territorial integrity" after the conclusion of the Kosovo process in order to reinforce that the Kosovo case is unique. TEFFT